

## Mid-Carolina AHEC Awarded Youth Health Service Corps Grant

Mid-Carolina Area Health Education Center has been awarded a Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC) 2008 Grant by Northwestern Connecticut AHEC. Mid-Carolina AHEC will administer the grant in collaboration with the other three South Carolina AHEC regional centers: Lowcountry, Pee Dee and Upstate. The proposal was only one of four selected from 30 applicants nationwide to receive funds to implement the YHSC curriculum.

The YHSC curriculum provides step-by-step guidance that helps students see a role for themselves as leaders in their communities and as partners with others in helping improve the



## Youth Health Service Corps

*Created by the Connecticut Area Health Education Center Program*

health of those who reside in their communities. The goals of the YHSC are consistent with those of the South Carolina AHEC's Health Careers Academy. Both programs seek to prepare high school students for entry into careers in healthcare and connecting them to the communities where they live.

The South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Academy is a four year program for high school students. The freshman and sophomore years of the Academy focus on health career exploration and academic skill development. The junior year will utilize the YHSC curriculum for student-led project development and health-related service learning placements. The final year of the Academy, the student's senior year in high school, will continue to promote service

*Continued on Page Two...*

## Connecting to Communities for Better Health

Diane M. Kennedy, Lowcountry AHEC Center Director

Beginning May 1, 2008 Colleton County women age 46 and younger may be able to qualify for free mammograms and diagnostic tests through a collaborative grant from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Lowcountry Affiliate.

The project started when Jennifer Nimmo, lead mammographer at Colleton Medical Center, paid a visit to the Lowcountry AHEC office to inquire about help for one of her patients. The patient, who was in her early 40s, had no insurance, and had a positive screening mammogram. Jennifer had heard that Lowcountry AHEC was a collaborator with the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Lowcountry Affiliate and she hoped to find a way to get diagnostic studies for this patient. Lowcountry AHEC staff members were able to connect Jennifer with a Komen Lowcountry grantee in Beaufort and the studies were performed for the uninsured patient. Although the

*Continued on Page Two...*

*Continued from Page One...Youth Health Service Corps*

learning and also focus on matriculation to college and/or health professions training.

The South Carolina AHEC anticipates that the students participating in the YHSC program will benefit greatly from this experience. The intensive service learning component of this program increases the likelihood that students will complete their health professions training better equipped to help improve the health of those they serve.

Grant funding for the YHSC is provided by the Northwestern Connecticut AHEC through a grant provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Learn and Serve America (LSA).



*Continued from Page One...Connecting to Communities*

immediate problem was addressed, the larger access issue remained and the project, now called "Pink Prevention Colleton", was born.

The two organizations realized that they needed a third partner to act as fiscal agent since the hospital, as a for-profit entity could not apply directly for funds. With United Way of Bamberg, Hampton and Colleton Counties acting as the fiscal agent, all the pieces were in place to write the grant. The \$5,000, three-month, mini-grant was received in April and runs from May through July 2008. So far, five women have been referred by their family physicians to receive diagnostic services.

This grant is an example of how AHECs can collaborate and partner to improve the health of the local community. Lowcountry AHEC's role in this project has been to act as the convener, grant writer, and educator. The educational component will be fulfilled largely by Colleton County students who will be taking the South Carolina Rural Interdisciplinary Program of Training (SCRIPT).



These SCRIPT students will assist with getting the word out about the grant to healthcare providers and to the community at large. They will do this in a number of different ways, including an education session with the community, distributing flyers and intake forms, and possibly communicating via

the local radio stations. If all goes well, the partners plan to apply for a larger Komen Lowcountry Affiliate grant, which will be available in December of 2008.

For additional information, contact Lowcountry AHEC at 843-782-5052.

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium

Executive Director  
David R. Garr, MD

South Carolina AHEConnects Editor  
Ragan DuBose-Morris, MA

## Goforth Family to Spend Year in Afghanistan

By Gary A. Goforth, M.D., Director of Medical Education and the Family Medicine Residency Program at Self Regional Healthcare

*(This is the second in a series of articles following Dr. Goforth on his mission abroad.)*

As Kathy and I anticipate relocating to Kabul, Afghanistan on July 14, 2008, we want to express our heartfelt thanks for all of you who have supported our work through encouragement, prayer, and financial support. Kathy and I felt a distinct call to serve in Afghanistan in November, 2006 during the Global Health Missions Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. We have had multiple assurances since that time that this is truly God's call for our lives.

I will work at CURE International Hospital developing a new Family Medicine Residency Program. We have a great deal of work in improving the curriculum, incorporating faculty development, developing a system to utilize the program's graduates in rural areas of Afghanistan, and managing a very busy hospital. Kathy will serve as a high school math teacher at the International School of Kabul (ISK), a Christian Oasis K-12 school that provides English-based education to many expatriate and Afghan children. She will be teaching AP Calculus, Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry (and perhaps other courses). We have both been communicating regularly with our contacts in Kabul, Oasis schools, and CURE International. Many have expressed concern about our safety in this troubled country, but all seems to be relatively stable at the hospital and school at this time. We understand the power of prayer and trust that all of you will keep us in your prayers during our time in Afghanistan (July 14, 2008 to June 15, 2009).

For more information on CURE International Hospital and the International School of Kabul, please check out these web sites:

- International School of Kabul: <http://iskafghan.org/index.htm>



*Dr. Gary Goforth and his wife Kathy have spent the first part of this year preparing for their relocation to Kabul, Afghanistan.*

- CURE International Hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan: <http://www.helpcurenw.org/site/c.nv11leNYJyE/b.3474793/>

While we are in Kabul, I plan to maintain a blog and write regular articles for the Volunteers in Medical Missions newsletter, the Index-Journal Newspaper in Greenwood, and the South Carolina AHEC Connects newsletter. Please feel free to write us via e-mail anytime at [gagoforth@earthlink.net](mailto:gagoforth@earthlink.net) or [kagoforth@earthlink.net](mailto:kagoforth@earthlink.net).

Please pray for our work, for safe travel to Afghanistan, and for the staff of CURE International Hospital and the International School of Kabul.



## 2008 South Carolina AHEC Annual Meeting Focuses on Team Building

The South Carolina AHEC Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for the regional centers and Program Office to come together and celebrate the year's achievements while working towards next year's goals. This year's meeting was held March 31-April 1, in Spartanburg.

The meeting's theme focused on celebrating the 36-years South Carolina AHEC has been serving the citizens across South Carolina. Program highlights included strengths-based exercises and appreciative team building.

The Annual Meeting also provided an opportunity for recognition of outstanding staff, collaborators and educators. The following awards were presented for 2008:

### **Ambassador Award:** *Steve Boulanger, South Carolina AHEC, Program Office*

Steve Boulanger, Database Coordinator for South Carolina AHEC, has been named the South Carolina AHEC Ambassador of the Year. The purpose of the South Carolina AHEC Ambassador Award is to recognize a member of the South Carolina AHEC system who has made a major contribution to the enhancement of South Carolina AHEC by exhibiting excellence. Steve Boulanger has contributed to the enhancement of the South Carolina AHEC by helping to modernize the system's

data collection and reporting capabilities.

Steve embodies the A-H-E-C spirit

in the following ways: he maintains a positive ATTITUDE and is always friendly, polite, and especially calm; Steve is very HELPFUL and if he doesn't know the answer, he consistently finds



the answer quickly; he is a wonderful teacher and this has allowed staff to be EMPOWERED, less apprehensive of the database and more confident when using it; and finally, Steve's CREATIVITY to find data that was thought to be lost forever was one of his shining moments.

### **Clinical Training Site of the Year:** *Volunteers in Medicine*

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) based in Hilton Head, South Carolina has been selected as the South Carolina AHEC Clinical Teaching Site of the Year for 2008.



The site is selected based

on the following criteria: being an active interdisciplinary clinical teaching site, positive feedback on evaluations completed by students, and letters of nomination from coordinators and students.

In the 2006-2007 school year, 26 Lowcountry AHEC students received hands-on, patient-centered instruction through their clinical rotations at VIM. VIM was started 15 years ago by Dr. Jack McConnell with the goal of providing healthcare to the citizens of Hilton Head Island and Daufuskie Islands who were having difficulty obtaining basic health services. The primary mission of VIM is to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of this medically underserved population and their households. VIM operates on the donated time of over 450 retired medical professionals and lay volunteers who donate over 42,000 hours of service annually.

This year the review committee was impressed by the excellent testimonials submitted by students who had completed rotations at

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VIM. As one student said, "As a student, you have the opportunity to work with physicians in every specialty of medicine...I have learned more here than at any other rotation."

**Educator of the Year:** *Robbie Leonard, MS, PT*  
The South Carolina AHEC Continuing Education Council presents the Educator of the Year award to an exceptional educator that serves South Carolina's healthcare professionals. This year's recipient is Robbie Leonard, MS, PT from Easley, SC. The Educator of the Year is selected based on their ability to present content in a practical, useful format to meet the needs and expectations of program participants while also communicating material dynamically. Educators also have to successfully adapt presentations to address multiple learning styles.

Robbie Leonard is currently President and Owner of Leonard Physical Therapy, Inc. One of her strengths is her ability to deliver complicated content in an accessible, realistic manner. Participant feedback indicates that Robbie accomplishes this by artfully matching her teaching method and materials with her audience's level of knowledge and interest. One participant commented, "Robbie provided me with a wealth of knowledge and resources – and in an interesting, at times, amusing way...excellent teacher."



**Preceptor of the Year:** *Robert Ridgeway, III, MD*  
Robert Ridgeway, III, MD, has been selected as the South Carolina AHEC Preceptor of the Year for 2008. Dr. Ridgeway is an OB/



GYN with offices in Sumter and Manning, SC. The purpose of this award is to bring recognition to an outstanding community-based preceptor serving South Carolina health professions students. Each year practitioners volunteer to provide hours of clinical education to students from various health professions. It is their dedication to the education of the next generation of health professionals that is honored with this award.

This year the award committee was impressed by Dr. Ridgeway's commitment to the AHEC mission and work to provide excellence through education. He consistently received high evaluations as a preceptor and students speak highly of their rotation through his office. One stated, "I have had several rotations, but can honestly say that Palmetto Women's Health has been the best of them all. Dr. Ridgeway is a superior physician and a true educator."

**Years of Service Awards:** Presented by Dr. David Garr, South Carolina AHEC Executive Director

#### 5 Years:



Rose Cauthen



David Garr (Presented by Ms. Luciano)



Cynthia Gilster



Candace Luciano

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## Sixth Annual South Carolina Magnet Conference Recognizes Nursing Leaders for Evidence of Excellence

Nursing excellence can build strong institutions, improve patient outcomes, and improve the nursing workforce. This was the focus for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Magnet conference held in Columbia on April 9-10, 2008. Over 120 nursing leaders participated in this two-day event and presentations were provided by expert speakers from both national and local institutions.

Each year during the conference, a nursing leader who has contributed to the state's nursing workforce is recognized. This year Suzanne White, CNO for the Greenville Hospital System and President of the Greenville Memorial Medical Campus, received the Nursing Workforce Leader award. Suzanne definitely fits the category of a great leader and she exemplifies excellence throughout her organization. She has a history of excellent leadership in other organizations where she has worked and served. She holds the following credentials:

- Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing
- Fellow in Critical Care Medicine
- Fellow in the American Heart Association for Cardiovascular Nursing
- Past national president of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses
- National certification as Nursing Administrator – Advanced
- Immediate past president of the South Carolina Board of Nursing



The nurses who nominated her stated, "Suzanne has moved the current organization into the era of evidence-based care while holding tight to the holistic needs of patients and families."

Thirty-four posters of South Carolina "Best Practices" were received for the annual poster competition. Five posters received recognition:

First Place	Julie Eggert, PhD APRN-BC GNP AOCN Clemson University	Development and Testing of a Monitoring Tool for Elders with Dementia Experiencing Changes in Engagement in a Culture Change Setting
Second Place	Susanne J. Hudson, RN, BSN, WON, MBA Greenville Hospital System	Annual RN Retreat for Nursing Unit: A Strategy to Enhance Retention and Recruitment
Third Place	Juanita B. Seel, RN Greenville Hospital System	Collaborative Teams: The Role of the RN Clinical Documentation Specialist in Outcomes
Honorable Mention	Sue Powell, ADN, RN Spartanburg Regional Medical Center	Zap The VAP
Honorable Mention	Rachel Joseph Edwards, BS Greenville Hospital System	Better Visits: Giving Patients Choices in Their Healing Process: How One Integrated Healthcare System Developed a Successful Program

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This year the program provided presentations on how to recognize evidence and develop initiatives in excellence. Participants heard local experts discuss evidence-based practice, models of shared governance, leadership development, and how to document evidence of excellence for the 14 Magnet elements. Local speakers included Joanne Herman and Stephanie Burgess from USC, Laurie Zone Smith from MUSC, Monika Dutton from Roper/St Francis, Amy Joseph and Nicole Owens from Ralph H. Johnson VAMC, Susan Outen from the SCHA, Elizabeth Brown from Spartanburg Regional Medical Center, and Sue Seitz from Greenville Hospital System.

National and regional speakers included Shelia Englehardt, ANA Board Member, and Carole Staley Collins, Director of the Pathway to Excellence Program of the American Nursing Credentialing

Center of ANA, who introduced a new program in excellence that ANA is launching. Joni Bokovoy from Baylor All Saints Medical Center and consultant to ANA spoke on the three-legged stool of evidence model and Eddie Beard, CNE for Catawba Valley Hospital in North Carolina spoke about the impact Magnet designation can have on an institution.

The conference is supported and coordinated by South Carolina AHEC with help from the South Carolina Hospital Association, South Carolina Organization of Nurse Leaders (SCONL), Center for Nursing Leadership at the University of South Carolina, South Carolina Nurses Association, and hospital members of the South Carolina Magnet Planning Committee.

## **South Carolina Continues to Lead in Long Term Care Training**

The 5th Annual Nurse Aide Training Coordinators/Instructors Workshop was held April 16, 2008 in Columbia with over 150 attendees. This year's workshop focused on *Learner/Teacher Excellence* with presentations on person-centered care, adult learning techniques and skills development.

In 2003, the first workshop for nurse aide training coordinators was conducted to assure consistency of excellence in nurse aide training programs. The mission of the planning committee was to bring together nurse aide coordinators and instructors who are responsible for the training of nurse aides for the purpose of learning, sharing ideas, networking and assuring consistency of excellence in nurse aide training programs.

Instructors and training coordinators from technical schools, nursing homes, high schools, and privately-owned programs across the state attend the workshop every year. South Carolina has been a leader in bringing these instructors together and the knowledge gained is critical to

the quality of care for those living in long term care facilities.

Past presentations have included sessions on classroom management, understanding organizational systems, updates on testing requirements, and promoting the importance of leadership skills.

Co-sponsors for these workshops include the Office for the Study of Aging, Aiken Technical College; Center for Nursing Leadership, USC; Nurse Aide Competency Evaluation Service (NACES); Pearson VUE; South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium; South Carolina Association of Non-Profit Homes for the Aging; South Carolina Department of Education; and the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the USC Office for the Study of Aging at 803-777-5337 or <http://www.sph.sc.edu/osa>.



## South Carolina AHEC Residents' Annual Conference Held at Hickory Knob

On May 16 – 17, 2008, the South Carolina AHEC Residents' Annual Conference was held at Hickory Knob State Park in McCormick, SC. Residents from the AHEC-affiliated residency programs were invited to participate. A total of 59 residents attended the Conference along with eight Family Medicine Residency Program Directors and their faculty.

On Friday morning, a Chief Residents' Seminar designed for physicians who will be chief residents during the 2008-09 academic year was held. The session was conducted by Franklin Medio, Ph.D., Consulting Services for the Health Professions. The agenda included workshops on "Being an Effective Chief Resident" and "Becoming an Effective Clinical Teacher". Chief residents from each Family Medicine Residency Program attended.

On Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, The Hickory Knob Symposium provided an opportunity for residents to present brief 10 minute scholarly presentations. Presentations were categorized into basic research and quality improvement projects.

The distinguished panel of judges for the Symposium were Warren Newton, M.D., Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at UNC – Chapel Hill, Ed Evans, M.D., Director, Seneca Lakes Residency Program in Seneca, and Adrienne Ables, PharmD at Spartanburg



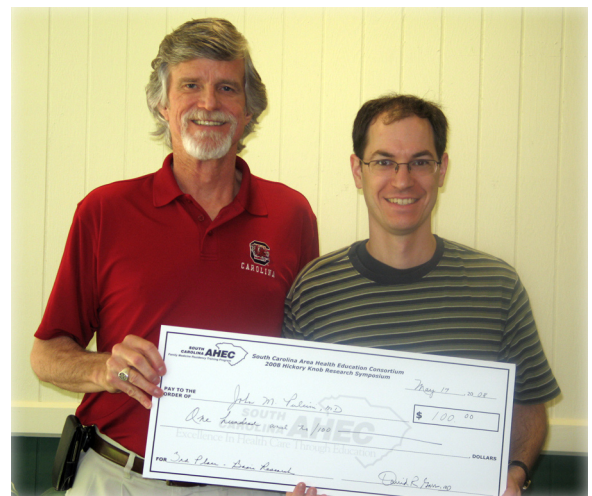
*Evans, Baughman, Ables, Newton and Peter Carek (Symposium Chair) pictured.*

Regional Medical Center. Otis Baughman, MD, Director of Medical Education and Family Medicine Residency Program at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center was the Moderator for the Symposium. An Awards Luncheon was held after the Hickory Knob Symposium and cash prizes were presented to the following winners:

First Place (\$300.00) – Basic Research  
Tenley Palisin, MD – Columbia – Family Medicine "Comparison of Eating Disorders in NCAA Division I Female Athletes to Non-Athlete Collegiate Females" (Not Pictured)



Second Place (\$150.00) – Basic Research  
Lindsay Sherrard, MD – Greenwood – Family Medicine "Water Safety Awareness of Middle School Adolescents"



Third Place (\$100.00) – Basic Research  
John Pulcini, MD – Greenville – Pediatrics  
"A Window into Food Allergy: A Survey of School Nurses in Greenville School Corporation"





## HEALTH PROFESSIONAL CAREER PROFILE

### HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATORS

Healthcare administrators also known as healthcare executives have the responsibility of improving the health of their communities. The healthcare administrator's role is diverse. Duties of an administrator include the integration of healthcare delivery into their community, advancement of technology for their patients, to be a catalyst for collaboration between their organization, physicians, businesses, insurers and others that desire to improve health. Other duties include disease prevention and wellness promotion in their community. The healthcare administrator is responsible for controlling costs by using good planning and budget development. Meanwhile, the administrator assures quality care is provided by his/her institution by personnel development and policy and procedure implementation. The healthcare administrator achieves these goals through local, state and federal agencies and governing boards.



Health Organizations • Public Health Departments • Universities

#### **Educational Preparation**

Students interested in becoming healthcare administrators should take general college preparatory courses in high school. Students also must earn a minimum of a bachelor's degree, preferably in business, health policy and administration or a related field. Most employers require a graduate degree in healthcare, hospital or business administration. Studies cover financial management, policy development, administrative and business principles. Some healthcare administrators are also healthcare practitioners such as physicians, nurses or others who have

received additional training or experience.

**Educational Programs** • Clemson University, Clemson • Lander University, Greenwood • Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston • University of South Carolina, Columbia • Winthrop University, Rock Hill

**Areas of Specialization** • Consultant • Facilities Administrator • Finance • Health Program Analyst • Home Health Agency Director • Hospital Administrator • Information Systems Administrator • Managed Care (HMO/PPO) • Materials Management • Medical Practice Administrator • Public Health Administrator

**Places of Employment** • Clinics • Retirement Centers • Consulting Firms • Healthcare Associations • Hospices • Hospitals • Mental

**Professional Organizations** • American College of Healthcare Executives, [www.ache.org](http://www.ache.org); Medical Group Management Association [www.mgma.com](http://www.mgma.com); National Association of Health Services, [www.nahse.org](http://www.nahse.org); South Carolina Hospital Association, [www.scha.org](http://www.scha.org); The Association of University Programs in Health Administration, [www.aupha.org](http://www.aupha.org)



## Healthcare Administrator Helps Patients Receive Outpatient Care

Denophilas Adkins currently manages a budget of \$16 million as the Director for Outpatient Campus Development with Moses Cone in Greensboro, NC. His responsibilities as a healthcare administrator include bringing outpatient services to communities throughout Greensboro.

Deno, as he is known, recalls graduating from Dunwoody High School in Atlanta, GA in 1997 as “so long ago.” He entered Furman University that fall and became involved in the Upstate AHEC Health Careers Program during his sophomore year as a summer intern at Greenville Memorial Hospital.

“I was unsure at that time if I wanted to become a surgeon or a health administrator,” explains Deno.

His internship was split to allow him to shadow a surgical administrator and a surgical resident to give him greater insight into both fields.

“My interest in business became stronger following that experience. I realized that I enjoyed the management aspect more than the direct patient care. My performance in my science classes also helped to make my decision to enter health administration.”

*“Look at life not in terms of hopes and dreams, but more as a series of opportunities to seize upon.”*

The fall following his summer experience with AHEC, Deno was instrumental in the development of an AHEC health careers program at Furman. He worked to get the organization recognized by the Student Government Association and the University as an official organization and served as president for two years.

“Participating in AHEC activities created an early exposure to a field that I was interested in and helped me to develop a network that is still supporting me today.” He encourages students to, “Look at life not in terms of hopes and dreams, but more as a series of opportunities to seize upon.”

Following his college graduation in 2001, Deno enrolled in Georgia State University where he earned a dual Master’s of Business Administration and Master’s of Health Administration degree in 2003.

“I completed my fellowship and internship with Moses Cone and was able to secure a position here upon graduation.”

Deno remained active with AHEC programs during his graduate studies serving as a speaker during the Summer Institute and participating in AHEC forums with South Carolina’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). He is currently working on a cancer awareness project with the Greensboro AHEC in North Carolina.

When asked what he likes most and least about his position, Deno explains, “Aligning individual interests to be successful in achieving a common purpose is challenging, but I really enjoy working with and providing services for people.”

Deno invites students who are interested in healthcare administration to contact him by email with any questions at [denoadkins@yahoo.com](mailto:denoadkins@yahoo.com).

## Teen Earns Hefty Gates Scholarship

Jessica L. De Vault

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GoUpstate.com (Reprinted with Permission)*

Keeping Band-Aids in her pocket at age 5 was a sign Lauren Littlejohn was destined to work in the medical field.

The 18-year-old Spartanburg High School senior had plans to become a pediatric nurse practitioner: she now keeps a first-aid kit in her purse, just in case.

Her drive and desire to help others have made her a standout student with a grade point average of 4.76, a class ranking of 24 out of 425 seniors and numerous honors, including the Student of the Year Award from the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium.

Despite these credentials, Littlejohn was sure it would not be enough to snag a spot in the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) program.

Out of 13,000 applicants across the nation, Littlejohn was chosen to be one of 1,000 students to join the GMS program.

The GMS program is one of the largest scholarship initiatives in the nation. Originally funded by a \$1 billion grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 1999, the program seeks out 1,000 high-talent, low-income minority students to assist with any unmet financial needs during their collegiate endeavors, said Mary Williams, the program's director of communications and administration.

"We make a selection based on academics, community service and leadership," Williams said.

The financial aid is renewable each year and can be rewarded for up to five years at the undergraduate level.

Students entering graduate school in the fields of science, computer science, library science, engineering, education, mathematics or public

health are eligible for a fellowship.

Since its inception, the program has funded the education of 11,000 students.

### Standout student

As prepared as Littlejohn always has been with her trusty first-aid kit, she was just as unprepared to pay for college. She aggressively applied for numerous funding opportunities. She will attend Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina. She also had been accepted at Clemson University, the University of South Carolina and Charleston Southern University.

She recently was awarded the Chancellor's Scholarship at Winston-Salem State, and it will cover all her tuition expenses.

Littlejohn will have the option of using her additional funding from the scholars program toward her graduate degree or for personal expenses.

Glover Smiley, her high school guidance counselor, said winning a top scholarship of any sort shouldn't be a surprise when it comes to Littlejohn.

Smiley has known Littlejohn since she was in eighth grade.

Smiley said Littlejohn sticks out in a crowd of students.

"When I first met her, she was a little shy, but she was very inquisitive. I figured she was a sharp little girl. She had a great personality - very friendly and outgoing," Smiley said.

That "sharp little girl" quickly grew into a competitive student, varsity cheerleader, avid dancer and volunteer.

"She holds down a part-time job at JC Penney. She does a kiddie camp for cheerleading, and



PHOTO BY: TIM KIMZEY  
*Lauren Littlejohn, 18, was one of 13,000 applicants chosen to be a Gates Millennium Scholar.*

she does a lot of volunteer work at AHEC," Smiley said. "You hate to say that she's perfect, but she's almost that way. When you think about someone to represent the school, her name just pops up. She's not a young lady that says she stands out, but she does stand out."

When Littlejohn asked Smiley to be her nominator for the scholars program, he willingly obliged.

Perhaps by coincidence, he also nominated Spartanburg High alum Tiffany Thompson for the program in 1999. Thompson, who was in her sophomore year at North Carolina A&T State University, was deemed a program scholar in 2000.

Maybe Smiley just knows how to pick outstanding students.

"(Littlejohn and Thompson) have a lot in common. Their personalities, their work ethic, the way they have everything organized; they're almost basically the same," Smiley said. "They're just outstanding young people."

Littlejohn would need a recommendation for the program as well, so she turned to her former supervisor, Selena Henderson, who was the Health Careers Coordinator for Upstate AHEC.

Henderson said she knew Littlejohn had the smarts and leadership skills to go far.

"She's a very good student. I could always trust her to do the right thing," Henderson said. "Some kids aren't sure, but she's very structured and focused, and she set those milestones to get to the larger goal."

### Helping others

The youngest of three children, Littlejohn has always been in a friendly competition with her two sisters.

Marilyn Foster-Hollis said her daughters each have been academically motivated.

The middle daughter, 19, is a sports medicine major at Winthrop University on a full scholarship. The eldest, 25, graduated from Benedict College with a computer engineering degree and has received her master's of business administration at Strayer University.

"I was a Wofford graduate, but I just expected them to do better than I did," Hollis said. "They need to excel me."

Working and studying hard were a given for the senior, and excelling came naturally.

"I think my drive is something I learned from my family," Littlejohn said. "It's not something everybody's raised with."

Smiley, who encouraged Littlejohn to pursue a double major in nursing and biology, said Littlejohn would likely excel beyond her own expectations and become a

doctor.

But Littlejohn has her heart set on nursing.

"I like the aspects of nursing. I actually like working with the people. I like talking to people and getting to know them. I have always taken care of people," she said.

Since so many people have mentored and guided the honor roll student, she feels compelled to give back to her community through the medical field.

"That's my goal in life: to reach out and help someone, whether it be helping them physically or mentally or emotionally," Littlejohn said. "In nursing, I can do all three aspects at one time and reach a lot of people."

"And that's all I want in life."

*"That's my goal in life: to reach out and help someone, whether it be helping them physically or mentally or emotionally."*



## Careers in a Box

*Malene Baxley, Regional Career Specialist-Waccamaw Region and Pee Dee Coalition Member*

Middle school career specialists in the Pee Dee area received a pleasant surprise when they were presented with "Careers in a Box" at the State Department of Education's Personal Pathways Regional Training Session in Florence, SC on March 5, 2008. Through the combined efforts of the Pee Dee Coalition for Health Careers and the Northeastern Education and Business Alliance (NEBA), health career awareness information was collected and assembled so that the 53 middle schools represented at the conference could receive their own "Careers in a Box."

The "box," provided by the Pee Dee Coalition for Health Careers, is a handy rolling crate which includes materials such as the "Amazing Hospital Careers" DVD, Personal Pathways Career Cluster Resource DVD, Student Diversity DVD, and various informational brochures. These resources were provided by the Pee Dee Coalition and a number of healthcare agencies in the Pee Dee, including Carolinas Hospital System, McLeod Regional Medical Center, Francis Marion University Department of Nursing, and Georgetown Hospital System.

The boxes and materials were assembled by students at the Dillon County Technology Center.

The goal of the Pee Dee Coalition for Health Careers, to increase the number of minorities into healthcare related fields, coincides well with South Carolina's Personal Pathways to Success, which was created by the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) of 2005 as a way of connecting academic studies with preparation for entering the workforce. One provision of EEDA is that each middle and high school in the state must have the services of a career specialist as part of a school's guidance team to work with students in the area of career awareness and career exploration. The "Careers in a Box" was a welcome resource for the career specialists to share information about the Health Science Career Cluster.

The Pee Dee Coalition includes representatives from the following counties: Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marlboro, Marion, Sumter and Williamsburg, and its activities are funded by a grant from The Duke Endowment. For additional information, visit [www.peedeerc.org](http://www.peedeerc.org).

*Continued from Page Five...Years of Service Awards*

### 10 years:



Ashley Breland



Julie Ghent



Diane Kennedy

### 20 Years:



Barbara Hicklin

### 30 Years:



Jackie Brown

Congratulations to all the 2008 South Carolina AHEC award recipients!

## Davis Achieves Career Goals After Taking First Step With AHEC

During the summer of 2004, Alison Davis was accepted as a Fellow in the South Carolina AHEC Nursing Careers Academy. She had recently graduated from Darlington High School in the Pee Dee AHEC region, and was eager to learn as much as she could about the nursing profession. Alison saw her participation in the Academy as the first step of her journey to becoming a registered nurse.

Four years later, Alison Davis became Alison Davis, RN. She beamed with pride as she was “pinned” by Francis Marion University’s Chair of Nursing, Dr. Sylvia Lufkin on May 1, 2008. The pinning ceremony is a culminating event which symbolically welcomes newly-graduated nurses into the nursing profession. The nursing school graduates are awarded a pin that reflects the name and values of the nursing school which is then worn on their uniform when they enter the professional world. The ceremony usually includes reciting the Nightingale Pledge, which was first recited in 1893.

*“My participation in AHEC and the Academy definitely helped me to achieve my career goals.”*

Alison admits that there were a few bumps and challenges along the way, but that she was firm in her commitment to becoming a nurse.

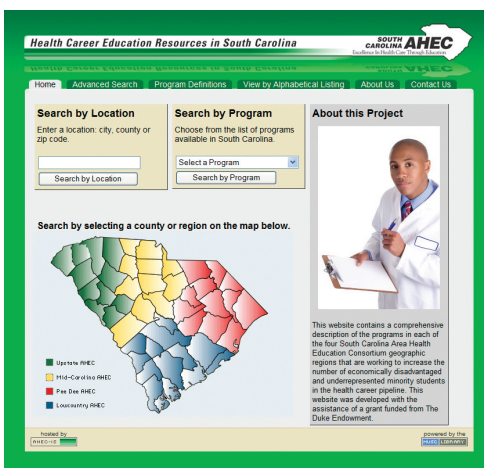
“AHEC was there to help me with some of those challenges,” Alison recalls, I was able to connect with some of the Academy faculty, like Dr. Monica Ward-Murray who coached me through some of my class

work, and Mrs. Angelica Christie who checked on me and helped to connect me to other resources for help.”

Alison looks forward to her first day of practice as she awaits the results of three recent interviews in the Florence/Darlington area of South Carolina.

“My participation in AHEC and the Academy definitely helped me to achieve my career goals,” she reflects. “Thank you for everything.”

The 2008 South Carolina AHEC Nursing and Dental Careers Academy was held on June 1 – 6, on the campus of the Medical University of South Carolina.



The Health Career Education Resources in South Carolina website is an electronic database that contains information about agencies and organizations that support the preparation of minorities and underserved residents of South Carolina who are interested in exploring or pursuing professions of healthcare. The website is made possible through the support of The Duke Endowment. Access the HCEC website at <http://ahec.library.musc.edu/hcer>.

## South Carolina Cross Cultural Healthcare Project

### Part II: Nurse Led Evidence-Based Improvement Projects

*(This is part two in a continuing series of articles detailing the South Carolina Cross Cultural Healthcare Project).*

Many times after a conference, the attendees go back to their normal work routines and, sadly, much of what they learned is forgotten. The most exciting part of the South Carolina Cross Cultural Project, however, is what happens when the participants return to their workplaces. Built into this project is a unique feature, six-months of post-Institute coaching. After learning about evidence-based practice and specific ways to develop and implement an improvement project, each participant or team of participants is assigned a coach to assist them in their efforts. These coaches are chosen for their encouraging spirit and familiarity with the quality improvement processes. They serve as resources for their teams and as cheerleaders to keep the Institute momentum going.

Presently, nurses from 14 organizations in the Upstate and Lowcountry AHEC regions are involved in projects related to cultural competency. Utilizing knowledge and skills gained through the Institute, these nurses began to develop plans for changing something about their hospital or workplace to make it more culturally sensitive and improve access to care or information for limited English proficiency (LEP) patients. The staff of the Institute was delighted at the energy and creativity demonstrated by the 2006 and 2007 Institute graduates.

Some of the accomplishments of this amazing group of nurses include:

- Translation of many materials into Spanish. Although generic materials are available, there are numerous forms and specific instructions that are not commercially available and must be customized to the facility providing the care. Several nurse-led teams were instrumental in bringing their hospitals into compliance with standards regarding availability of information in each patient's language. These translation projects occurred in various areas of different hospitals including obstetrics, clinics, inpatient floors, and the emergency department. Materials included forms, discharge instructions, medication information, signage, as well as many other types. One obstetric unit now has every piece of written information and signs in both English and Spanish.
- One project was able to demonstrate improved understanding of treatment due to the Spanish materials and other process changes that involved family members in treatment decisions.
- Another project focus was around the availability of interpreters for LEP patients. These projects varied from making sure interpreters were involved in post-surgical calls to improving the use of the "language line" by providers when on-site interpreters were not available.
- Another common finding by our nurse project leaders was that information they assumed would be available for tracking the use of interpreters or even obtaining the number of LEP patients seen in their





facility was difficult to obtain. Therefore, at least two projects developed around working with the IT department to make sure those statistics could be tracked in the future in order to improve services.

- One project team developed a short video in Spanish that gives basic information about what to expect during an Emergency Room visit. This video is now being used during the few minutes between the time the patient arrives and the arrival of the interpreter to “bridge the gap”.
- A community outreach project was developed and has been implemented to provide Childbirth Education Classes for Spanish-speaking LEP patients in a rural area. The class is taught through an interpreter who is a member of the obstetric unit’s staff.
- Another outreach project idea started out as a small blood pressure screening and ended up as a well attended Hispanic community health fair.
- One project team worked on staff awareness and cultural sensitivity in their facility. The result was the formation of a Cultural Diversity Team which provides information to the hospital staff prior to the arrival of international patients so that all will be familiar with the culture of the family.
- Another nurse investigated her hospital’s billing practices and found that all bills were sent in English. This hospital now sends bills in Spanish and has a Spanish speaking consultant to help LEP families set up their payment schedules.
- Another project focused on customer satisfaction in LEP clients. This project has been extended another year so that the facility can address the issue more fully.
- Many projects focused on raising awareness and dispelling unfounded biases as a part of their work. Bulletin

boards, awareness lunches, games, and other creative methods were used to share what participants had learned during the Institute.

In addition to the projects that were reported and briefly summarized above, there were many “spin off” projects not listed. Almost every nurse reported that the intended project revealed other issues that needed to be addressed, sometimes before the original project could be implemented.

*Compassion and enthusiasm are impossible to teach but can be “caught”! The nurses who leave the 4-day Institute seem to be highly “contagious” as demonstrated by the number and scope of their projects which could not have been accomplished by themselves alone. They have gone back to their facilities and led others in looking for ways to become more culturally competent, not only to our Spanish speaking population but to anyone who does not have a good command of the English language and comes needing help.*

By training a relatively small number of nurses, giving them the skills and knowledge to lead improvement projects, and providing encouragement and support, important things are being accomplished!

In the next issue of South Carolina AHEConnects, the article will discuss the SC Cross Cultural Healthcare Project statewide conference. This conference provides an opportunity for the nurses to present their improvement projects via poster presentations and learn from a nationally recognized speaker on Cultural Competency.

## Medical Response Team Becomes Reality

*Greg Edens, MD, Family physician in Easley and member of the Disaster Relief Medical Team of the South Carolina Baptist Convention*

After Hurricane Katrina, a South Carolina Baptist Convention disaster relief medical team was only a dream. That dream is now becoming a reality.

After a medical team of three people was sent to the Gulf Coast to assist in the aftermath of Katrina, talk started about beginning a regular medical unit for our state's disaster relief ministry. Two years later, the list of volunteers has grown from three to more than 150. These volunteers are stepping up to help form a new avenue for ministry by providing medical care in future disaster settings.

God has also brought in key leadership and a state expert in disaster medicine to train and provide advice in the development of the medical unit. Dr. Ralph Shealy, co-director for the South Carolina AHEC Disaster Preparedness and Response Training Network, has provided a total of 24 hours of training for the medical team during the last three statewide disaster relief conferences.

Some of the training has dealt not only with medical care in a natural disaster, but also with how to respond in settings caused by acts of terrorism or epidemics, such as pandemic flu. At a disaster training in October, the medical team was able to perform an exercise in triaging more than 100 victims in less than 10 minutes in a mass-casualty scenario.

Eddie Pettit, a member of the disaster relief group of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, is serving as the medical unit director and brings many years of experience in disaster relief work. Other leadership has been recruited and now is in place.

Over the next few months the medical team will be engaged in a training partnership with SC1 DMAT, which is South Carolina's only federal disaster medical assistance team. During late February and May, there will be workshops where the leadership of SC1 DMAT will mentor the leadership of our state Baptist convention's medical response team.

This training is to help prepare our team for a full-scale demonstration exercise in July. This project is designed to demonstrate that a non-governmental disaster medical team can be trained and equipped to operate effectively alongside a federal team. The project is sponsored by the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium Disaster Preparedness and Response Training Network with funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Recently, the South Carolina Baptist Nurses Fellowship also partnered with the South Carolina Baptist Disaster Response Medical Team to provide needed support and other volunteers from the nursing field.

The team leadership and volunteers will be trained and ready to respond if a catastrophic event occurs. Fortunately, there has not been another major disaster such as Katrina that required the response of a medical unit. This has allowed needed training and organization to occur for the team.

The medical unit is structured similar to federal medical teams that respond to a disaster. This allows better communication in a disaster setting with other entities when everyone is talking the same language.

The medical unit will be under the command structure of the South Carolina Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Group, with Cliff Satterwhite as director. The SCBC disaster relief medical team will be made available when asked to respond in times of disaster.

*Continued on the Next Page ...*

The list of volunteers for the medical unit includes doctors, nurses, paramedics, etc. Also, one-third of our database is made up of non-medical personnel. In the development of the medical team, we have realized that for it to be a self-contained, self-sufficient unit, it will need help from both medical and non-medical volunteers alike. While medical personnel are busy taking care of patients, non-medical personnel will make sure the field clinic is running smoothly.

There is a need for more volunteers. Persons interested in joining in a medical or non-medical capacity should contact Lib Coleman at [libco@aol.com](mailto:libco@aol.com) for more information.



*Pictured are the 79 members of the South Carolina Baptist Disaster Relief Medical Team who trained in North Augusta on March 28 and 29. They are posed in front of one of the tents they erected as part of their training. South Carolina AHEC provides expertise and technical support to this collaborative effort as part of its Disaster Preparedness and Response Training Network.*

**August 15 -16, 2008**  
**Charleston Area**  
**Convention Center**  
5055 International  
Boulevard - North  
Charleston, SC

The nation's Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) are leaders in the field of health education and training for healthcare providers and are uniquely positioned to help the United States prepare for natural and man-made disasters. The South Carolina AHEC, supported in part by a federal grant, is hosting a national summit for emergency and disaster medicine providers to learn about the latest methods for responding to and treating victims of emergencies and disasters and to learn about the newest products and technologies available to providers.



The South Carolina AHEC Emergency and Disaster Medicine Summit will be held at the Charleston Area Convention Center on Friday, August 15 and Saturday, August 16, 2008. Participants will have the opportunity to select from the following educational subject areas on day one: Pre-Hospital Care (EMS), Emergency Nursing, Disaster Medicine and General Interest. The second day features a panel of experts who will consider the decisions communities face trying to prevent, prepare for, or respond to massive public health emergencies. In a moderated discussion with the audience, this panel will explore the kinds of choices they will have to confront in the case of a bioattack.

Additional information and to register:  
<http://www.scahec.net/prepares/summit>.



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19 Hagood Avenue  
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## CALL FOR ARTICLES:

The editorial staff of "South Carolina AHEConnects" welcomes the submission of articles, success stories and upcoming events for the Fall Edition.

Please forward information, articles and photos to Ragan DuBose-Morris at [duboser@musc.edu](mailto:duboser@musc.edu). The deadline for submissions is August 15, 2008.